

the Clare Election was the most nervous moment of his life. I think he said he did not sleep a wink for three days. Had he failed he would have been ridiculous for life. Did not determine on the step until he had tried every country gentleman favorable to the Catholics. Two days after the election, a legal flaw was detected in the registration of his voters by which, had it been discovered in time, his majority, and much more, would have been cut off.

How sorry I am that I did not keep some record of the last four months. I revived my acquaintance with the Sheridans, with whom I was so intimate last year, Mrs. Norton, Helen Blackwood, Lady Seymour — three matchless sisters, and the mother and Lady Graham.

Mrs. Norton's house was the scene of the famous encounter with Lord Melbourne, of which the story has been so often told.

It was in 1834 that I met Lord Melbourne at Storey's Gate and was introduced to him. Lord Melbourne asked how he could advance me in life, and half proposed that I should be his private secretary, enquiring what my object in life might be. 'To be Prime Minister.' It was then that Lord Melbourne, with a gravity not common with him, set to work to prove to me how vain and impossible to realise, in those days, was this ambition. It was a long speech, and I think I could repeat every word of it still.

So Disraeli himself told the story to Lord Rowton, and Melbourne's biographer supplies what is missing. Lord Grey, it will be borne in mind, had not yet resigned, and Melbourne was still Home Secretary. Disraeli was presented to him after dinner, and the two had a long conversation.

The Minister was attracted more and more as he listened to the commonplace language and spirit of the youthful politician, and thought to himself he would be well worth serving. Abruptly, but with a certain tone of kindness which TM ^?uy air of assumption*, he said, 'Well now, tell

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and the Bafos TM (K ^ Grey could PerhaPS have carried the Inform Bill; but he is an old man; and when he gives

